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FEBRUARY 1917: THE REAL
RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

1. The Bolsheviks did not overthrow the Tsar; that was done by masses of workers, with spontaneous participation of soldiers and liberal political leaders, -- when the Bolshevik leaders were in exile and not even expecting a revolution at that time.

2. This liberal revolution, the "February Revolution," culminated a century of accelerating political and economic progress toward "Westernization" in Russia (which had been heavily oriental in political character,

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due to a combination of geographical-historical circumstances.) It failed when the Bolsheviks seized power by a secretly-planned military coup, pushing the people back toward serfdom. (Note close parallels between Soviet "collectivization" and serfdom.)

3. Among the manifold reasons for the failure of the Russian liberals to achieve their democratic ideals and for the success of the Bolsheviks in subverting and taking over the machinery of the state, the following are particularly significant:

a. Tsar Nicholas II had totally failed to comprehend and to facilitate the renaissance sweeping through his country: on the contrary, he tried to hold back the clock, even attempting to roll back the limited advances won by democratic leaders in the 1905 popular revolution.

b. As a result, the Russian political leaders and people were woefully inexperienced in democratic procedures, and far more united in what they opposed than in what they wanted to replace the old.

c. WW I dealt a catastrophic blow to Russian freedom: on the one hand, it precipitated the liberal revolution prematurely (whereas it seems reasonable to estimate that in another decade or so Russian political leadership and institutions would have been far better prepared to carry it through successfully); on the other, it was the major cause of the growing disruption and chaos in which the Bolshevik conspiracy flourished and which eventually made it possible to carry off the coup despite the relatively small numbers involved.

d. The Bolshevik "putsch" was designed to forestall the establishment of a legal, elected government. The results of the elections for the Constituent Assembly showed -- too late -- the lack of support for the Bolsheviks among the people. THE COMMUNISTS HAVE NEVER WON A FREE, POPULAR, NATIONAL ELECTION. (They have won a few local elections, but there freedom was not at stake.)

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